THE
Widow's Complaint,
A
POEM.

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BY

RICHARD MICHELL,

RECTOR of *Shaftſbury, Dorſet*;

And MASTER of the GRAMMAR-SCHOOL,

IN THAT PLACE.

BODLEIANA·RP

A ſummis hominibus eruditiſſimiſque accepimus, cæterarum rerum ſtudia, et doctrina, et præceptis, et arte conſtare; poetam natura ipſa valere, et mentis viribus excitari, et quaſi divino quodam ſpiritu inflari. CICERO.

Well-ſounding Verſes are the Charms we uſe,
Heroic Thoughts, and Virtue, to infuſe.
Things of deep Senſe we may in Proſe unfold,
But they move more in lofty Numbers told. WALLER.

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10.

TO THE

Right Reverend Father in God,

JOHN,

BY DIVINE PERMISSION,

Lord Biſhop of Wincheſter,

AND PRELATE OF

The Moſt Noble Order of the Garter.

My Lord,

TO receive Marks of Eſteem from Perſons highly Dignified and truly Virtuous is the greateſt Honour of Human Life; and ſince I am ſo happy as to be amongſt the Number of thoſe who

who have experienced your Lordſhip's Affability and Good-nature, I beg Leave to lay this Poem at your Feet, as a Teſtimony of Gratitude for thoſe Favours which You ſo generouſly conferred upon me, at a Time when, after many Struggles, I had hardly emerged from Obſcurity.

As Poetry, my Lord, is a Relaxation from my more important Studies, and the ſad Cataſtrophe, which afforded Matter for this Work, happened in the Pariſh of *Warblington* ſoon after I met with *Your* Approbation; and to uſe the Expreſſion of VIRGIL,

——— *quæque ipſe miſerrima vidi,*
Et quorum Pars magna fui ———

I thought ſuch a Subject would be very ſuitable to my Purpoſe, and not unworthy of my Profeſſion.—That GOD may grant You, for the Benefit of our Church, long to enjoy and adorn the high Station

Station which you ſo deſervedly fill, is the hearty Prayer of many, but of none more earneſtly than,

My LORD,

Your LORDSHIP'S

Moſt obliged and faithful

Humble Servant,

RICHARD MICHELL.

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POEM.

CREATION ſmil'd—a glorious Proſpect roſe,
To wake the ſadden'd Eye from dull Repoſe;
The Sun deſcending to the Weſtern Main,
With oblique Rays enrich'd the flow'ry Plain;
The dancing Shadows lengthen'd thro' the Glade,
Th' illumin'd Air a floating Luſtre made;

The boiſt'rous Waves huſh'd to a deep Serene,
Reflecting Waters were a dazzling Scene;
The playful Lambs danc'd to a tinkling Sound,
Leap'd here and there, and ſpurn'd the ſilken Ground;
While their fond Dams in a promiſcuous Throng,
Browzing the Graſs, but ſlowly paſs'd along;
Alternate Bleatings fill'd the Foreſts round,
The Foreſts ſtill re-echoed to the Sound;
Unnumber'd Gems ambroſial Odours ſhed,
Charm'd the fond Eye, and eas'd the aching Head;
The airy Songſters hopp'd from Spray to Spray,
And tun'd with choral Mirth the warbling Lay;
When ruddy *Veſper* roſe, ſerenely ſhone,
And ſcatter'd Radiance round Night's ſable Throne;
The riſing Moon enlarg'd the pleaſing Sight,
The riſing Moon was deck'd with Silver Light,
Such as th' Almighty darts from Heaven above,
To raiſe the Soul to Chearfulneſs and Love!
Sky, Earth, and Sea was each a charming Scene,
Throughout the whole Enchantment ſeem'd to reign!

When

When wretched MYRA, 'whelm'd in endleſs
Grief,
Walk'd on the ſandy Shore to find Relief;
Two ſucking Babes her lab'ring Arms ſuſtain'd,
And for her abſent Huſband ſhe complain'd.
Her fault'ring Limbs at length could not with-
ſtand
The hard Fatigue---ſhe dropp'd upon the Strand---
Her little Orphans' penetrating Cries,
Would have forc'd Pity from the Stoic's Eyes,
Which ſhe laid careful to her milky Breaſt,
And quickly ſooth'd into a pleaſing Reſt:
Whilſt guſhing Tears flow'd down her Cheeks
apace,
And fill'd with running Streams the neighb'ring
Place.
She roll'd about her melancholy Eyes,
And view'd the Land, and Sea, and lofty Skies.
Woe foll'wing Woe---intolerable Pain!---
Her Grief breaks forth in this pathetic Strain---
" Look where I will---I ſee all Nature bleſt
With ev'ry Thing that tends to joyous Reſt,

Thoſe diſmal Fiends, which make all Mortals moan,
Trouble and Care, now dart at me alone.
Night's coming on --- Oh! widow'd is my Bed ---
Where can I reſt in Peace my weary'd Head!
For I am robb'd of every Charm and Bliſs!
Theſe Orphans want their Father's tender Kiſs!
They'll want his Labour, Induſtry, and Care,
To feed their hungry Mouths with wholeſome Fare.
No more he lands to glad me with Surprize!
Balm of my Life, and Pleaſure of my Eyes!
Death has immerg'd him in eternal Sleep,
He lies entombed in the briny Deep.
My matchleſs Grief will never have an End,
I've loſt my beſt, my deareſt Boſom Friend!
Oh ever loſt! What now can Comfort give!
With him 'twas Life, without him--Death to live!
The vi'lent Storm which I ſaw lately riſe,
Was far more dreadful to my ſick'ning Eyes,
Than Soldiers fighting on the embattled Plain,
Who ſtrew the Ground with Gore and Bodies ſlain.

The whit'ning Ocean tumbled to the Shore,
The Wave behind urg'd on the Wave before,
And Foreſts round were fill'd with hoarſe re-
ſounding Roar.
The Skies came down in fluicy Sheets of Rain,
And purer Waters ſwell'd the briny Main.
The claſhing Clouds reported louder Sounds,
Than Cannons batt'ring down th' oppoſing
Mounds.
The bell'wing Winds ruſh'd thro' the dark'ning
Air,
And boded Death and never-ceaſing Care!
Tremendous *Neptune* with a fell Intent,
T' enlarge the Dread his dire Artill'ry ſent,
The roaring Ocean mounted up amain,
And forc'd the falling Waters back again.
No Sun afforded intermitting Light,
The Noon of Day was turn'd to baleful Night!
The Tempeſt with redoubled Fury rag'd,
In deadlier War the bluſt'ring Winds engag'd;
The ruffled Seas ran more than *Mountain-high*,
And ſmear'd with frothy White the ſable Sky.

Triumphant

Triumphant Death increas'd the ſad Affright,
Grim was his Look, more awful than the Night!
Th' impetuous Billows beat the Veſſel's Side,
The Veſſel wander'd on the boiſt'rous Tide;
Now whirl'd aloft, it ſail'd amid the Clouds!
A rapid Whirlpool broke the rattling Shrouds;
Now deep it bulg'd into th' abſorbing Main,
As if it never would appear again.
A dreadful Sight the yawning Deep diſplay'd,
The Veſſel roſe with boiling Waves array'd;
The Tempeſt ſeem'd to ceaſe, and to repair
The ſhatter'd Tackle was ABELLA's Care:
He ruſh'd upon the Deck---Oh fatal Day!
When ſudden mounted with impetuous Sway
A raging Wave---(tremendous to behold!)
By cruel Death inevitably roll'd,
Which 'whelm'd him in the Deep---on me he
cry'd---
'Till on his Lips his Words imperfect dy'd.
Oh! thus was ſunk--- Ah! ne'er to riſe again---
The beſt of Huſbands, and the beſt of Men!
I thought, O LAURA! cruel was thy Fate,
Sad and forlorn, and comfortleſs thy State.

Thy Lover lately try'd---but try'd in vain,
To ſave his Comrades in the boiſt'rous Main;
Toſs'd and re-toſs'd with ſtruggling Arms he
row'd,
While o'er his Back the foaming Billows flow'd.
The Billows rag'd with a more hideous Roar
Choak'd his hard Breath---but roll'd him to the
Shore---
Thy Sorrow's great---Unparallel'd is mine---
A thouſand Times more ſore and worſe than thine.
Thou haſt no ſtarving Orphans at thy Breaſt,
No piercing Cries to break thy nightly Reſt;
For when thou'rt weary'd out with tort'ring Grief,
Impreſſing Sleep will give thee ſome Relief.
Thy Lover was with Decency interr'd,
The Fun'ral Rites on him were all conferr'd:
But my ABELLA, doom'd to harder Fate,
Now in the worſt and moſt regretted State,
His lovely Body in the liquid Sea,
To quick---devouring Fiſhes lies a Prey.
Could he be found? then o'er his breathleſs Corſe,
I'd vent my Anguiſh and my ſad Remorſe;

His

His clay-cold Lips ſhould be with Kiſſes fed,
And o'er his Face unnumber'd Tears be ſhed;
His Bier I would with ſolemn Sighs purſue,
My ſtreaming Eyes ſhould all the Path bedew;
With true Reſpect I'd o'er his Grave impart,
The doleful Tribute of a broken Heart!
No Obſequies to him ſhould be unpaid,
My Comfort living, and my Sorrow dead!
Oh! wretched Huſband of a wretched Wife!
Fatal thy Death, but fatal more my Life;
Thou feel'ſt no Pangs for poor abandon'd me,
My plaintive Sounds are all unheard by thee.
On this ſad Earth I can no longer ſtay,
I'll with my Infants plunge into the Sea;
And them from cruel baneful Hunger free,
And end at once my Life and Miſery.
Here Mortals live in a precarious State,
Toſs'd up and down the changing Tides of Fate;
Some baſely rich are griping ſtill for more,
And ſtarve themſelves amidſt a plenteous Store.
Large Sums on worldly Splendor ſome expend,
And think their Pride and Grandeur ne'er will
End; But

But Ah! how ſoon they find themſelves deceiv'd
Of wiſh'd-for Life, and ſenſual Joys bereav'd:
Death ſummons all the Rich, the Bad, the Juſt,
The King and Beggar moulder into Duſt;
Oh! what a vain and thoughtleſs Creature's Man,
Whoſe longeſt Term of Life is ſcarce a Span;
Tho' he To-Day in perfect Health appears,
Perhaps To-Morrow cauſes bitter Tears.
Men of their latter End but little think,
Their Study's Wealth, or what to eat and drink;
Or raiſe fine Structures with elab'rate Care,
For a luxurious and uncertain Heir;
Who ſquanders ſoon a large Eſtate away,
And let's his Palace run to ſad Decay.
Yon Caſtle's Proof that once majeſtic ſtood,
And over-topp'd the Honours of the Wood:
The lofty Tow'rs a grand Appearance made,
The Moat profound Security diſplay'd:
O'er the Port-cullis many a Flatt'rer went,
To pay his Lordſhip ſervile Compliment:
His Lordſhip in Ambition's Chariot rode,
And vainly-glorious deem'd himſelf a God;

Zealous and prone to wordly Pomp and Shew,
He thought his Pride would never change its
Hue.
But what can ſtand the cruſhing Jaws of Time,
The certain bane of ev'ry blooming Prime.
The ſturdieſt Man impairs by creeping Age,
And feebly copes with Time's oppreſſive Rage;
Which will demoliſh as it goes along
Caſtles, that ſeem impenetrably ſtrong:
For that which could encounter hoſtile Bands,
Now to a Peaſant's Cot inferior ſtands.
I thought myſelf once happier than the Great,
My deareſt Huſband bleſt my lowly State;
But now I'm certain on this Side the Grave,
Enjoyment's doubtful both to King and Slave.
If giddy Mortals would but meditate,
The Conſequence of their unſettled State,
And learn the Nature of this wordly Life,
They'd ceaſe t' engage in peſtilential Strife;
On tranſitory Riches to rely,
Honour and Pomp they'd find but Vanity.
Their Faculties with the moſt punctual Care
They would exert, and cautiouſly prepare

For the ſtrict Summons of relentleſs Death,
That ſudden ſtops a helpleſs Mortal's Breath;
They'd reaſon wiſely on a future State,
And think no Honour and no Glory great,
But in th' Angelic tuneful Choir to ſing,
Eternal Praiſes to th' Almighty King.
I juſt deſpair'd of ever having Reſt,
A raging Wild-fire labour'd in my Breaſt;
Diſtracting Thoughts my mournful Paſſion rul'd,
Oh! horrid Grief---but now by Reaſon cool'd---
To drown myſelf and Babes!---Pray God for-
give
That raſh Expreſſion? ---Should I doubt to live,
Oh! where is Hope---the Soul's enliv'ning Ray,
That drives the ſadd'ning Storm of Grief away;
That chears the Soldier in a bloody Fight,
And beams on Ship-wreck'd Seamen friendly
Light;
For when they're caſt upon a dreary Shore,
Amid the Rocks that yield no fruitful Store,
And deafen'd with the hoarſe reſounding Main,
Hope intervenes and mitigates their Pain.

Oh! where's my Faith that I ſhould diſbelieve,
Th' Almighty's chearing Bounty to receive;
Thoſe vile inhuman Wretches, that diſtreſs
The mournful Widow and the fatherleſs,
He puniſhes ſevere with vengeful Hate,
And makes 'em rue their miſerable State.
Can I deſpair? ſince I have in Scripture read,
How good ELIJAH wond'rouſly was fed;
When direful Hunger urg'd his languid Breaſt,
The Ravens quick obey'd the LORD's Beheſt;
With nimble Wings they cut the fluid Air,
And brought the Holy Prophet wholeſome Fare.
At CHERITH's Riv'let he awhile at firſt,
With ſweet tranſparent Water quench'd his Thirſt,
And when that fail'd---the Lord advanc'd his Care—
And bade Him unto *Zarephath* repair,
A Widow with ſucceeding Cares oppreſs'd,
Which daſh'd like rolling Waves againſt her Breaſt,
And robb'd her ſadd'ning Soul of ſweet refreſhing Reſt.

The

The Prophet found her ſunk in deep Deſpair,
An only Son was her peculiar Care;
An only Meal for her and him was left,
She really was of Life's Support bereft;
Th' Almighty's Influence now ſerenely ſhone,
Two mighty Miracles the Prophet done;
Neither her Meal nor Cruſe of Oil decreas'd,
And her dear Son was e'en from Death releas'd.
Altho' from hence ABELLA's ever gone,
I hope to meet him at th' Almighty's Throne;
And while I'm here in Virtue's Path I'll tread,
And do my beſt to earn my daily Bread;
To Induſtry th' Almighty pays Regard,
And real Virtue meets with due Reward.
I've conquer'd paſſionate unruly Strife,
And Providence has giv'n me longer Life."---
Thus MYRA ſung, then gratefully withdrew,
And to ABELLA bade a long Adieu!
The tuneful Choir had tir'd their lab'ring Throats,
And Philomel diſclos'd ſuperior Notes:

While

While Stars unnumber'd roſe to gild the Night,
And bleſs th' unbounded Sky with ſparkling
Light.
Creation chear'd her as ſhe went along,
Her Ears were charm'd with a melodious Song;
Heav'n's Luminaries fed her gazing Eyes,
And all her Soul was fill'd with glad Surprize.